

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

March 8, 2010

MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria

PRESENT: Rob Caruso (Co-Chair), Lucie Chansky, Jini Fairley, and Heather Platt
REGRETS: Girard Plante (Co-Chair), Jane Brown, Jeff Hutter, Rosemary Larking, Barbara Lischinsky, and Jason Rosenberg
STAFF: Beverly Droz (Human & Vol. Services), Kathleen Cahill (Planning & Dev.)
GUESTS: Maryan Amaral

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The meeting was called to order at 6:45 pm and chaired by Rob.

NEW and OLD BUSINESS

Zoning Ordinance

Rob reported that Zoning & Planning had a hearing on Feb. 22 to look at revising the Zoning Ordinance. Ald. Hess-Mahan proposed an amendment to allow accessory apartments. Jason Rosenberg wrote a letter advocating for this since these apartments are critical for elderly and disabled people's abilities to stay at home with help of family or friends or personal care attendants (PCA), and for the financial ability of those same persons to be able to keep ownership of their home. Jason sent his letter as an individual. Lucie said up to 4 unrelated persons are allowed to live together and questioned the need for the ordinance change. Rob said the thrust is to allow an apartment within a home so the primary owner could have a PCA live there if need be. There was brief discussion about the issues of apartments near colleges. No action on this matter is required at this time.

Regional Meeting

Bev reported that the Town of Arlington will host a regional disabilities committee meeting on a Thursday in May. More information will be forthcoming.

Handicap Parking

Bev reported that the Circuit Street resident withdrew his request for the HP space in front of his home so there is no further action required on this case.

Newtonville: It was noted that the Traffic Council did not do what we had recommended.

A resident suggested parking spaces on the other side of the street, in front of the Bank of America and on the other side of the street in front of CVS. MCPD discussed this at our Oct. 2009 meeting and decided the HP spot would be better located to Austin Street due to vehicles turning the corner and it was noted that curb cuts would need to be installed. The spot on the corner of Walnut and Madison is very difficult. Members noted we should let the Traffic Council know that we disagree with what they did.

Newton Community Farm

Kathleen reminded members that we were initially trying to set up a site visit but we weren't able to schedule a time that worked for everyone involved. The Community Preservation Committee's funding recommendation included the following recommendation: "the City project manager work with Public Buildings, the City of Newton Law Department, and the Newton Farm Commission to submit the project's concept plans for review by the Design Review Committee and the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities, and take the comments of these committees into account when commissioning final design specifications and construction documents. The Mayor's Committee has two primary concerns about the current design plans - the limitations on access to all

floors caused by the choice of lift and the maintenance plan for the second method of egress. Kathleen has requested that a representative from the farm attend a MCPD meeting to explain the current design and provide an opportunity for the Mayor's Committee to ask questions. There was discussion about having a site visit now that the weather is warmer. Kathleen will look into it.

CDBG REPORT-Kathleen Cahill

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Kathleen Cahill presented the report. Comments are noted after a project.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Project CD10-03D. Expended, \$7,818; Budget balance: \$17,995; CD10-03D). Centre St. and Centre Ave. is a priority intersection; however it is on-hold pending a final decision by the Newton Corner Advisory Committee. Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. is another priority intersection. The scope of changes at Washington & Commonwealth includes an upgrade to the existing traffic signal equipment; there is approximately \$65,000 in funds available for this work. If leftover funds are available after the above equipment is installed accessible pedestrian signals will be considered and the Mayor's Committee will be able to weigh in on options. Other priority locations submitted to traffic engineering include: Washington and Beacon as well as Washington Street by Newton-Wellesley Hospital. Based on a recent presentation to City employees and MCPD members by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Polara (push button mounted) APS will be installed at these locations. C. Schuckel is obtaining a quote.

Charlesbank Playground (Project CD0903C. Budget balance, \$30,000). Phase I includes new play equipment and swings on top of rubberized safety surfacing, a new accessible entrance ramp, accessible benches and picnic tables, and planting of new trees and shrubs. CDBG access funds will pay for the accessible entrance ramp. The project is expected to be bid in March.

- Kathleen talked about Phase I of this project and described the design which she showed members. There is an accessible ramp from Nonantum Place to the new playground equipment. An accessible concrete walkway extends from the ramp around the play area. The play equipment has accessible rubberized surfacing. Maryan asked if the equipment was designed in the same way as the universally designed play equipment at Newton Centre Playground. Kathleen indicated that she would speak with Park and Recreation staff to learn more about the Newton Centre Playground play equipment.

Curb Cuts (Project CD1003C, Expended \$2,465 Budget balance, \$145,000). Design work has been requested for a total of 11 curb cuts in the Newtonville area, including Lowell and Washington. Planning and DPW will be working to have these locations ready for construction in Summer 2010.

-- Kathleen had before and after photos of the sidewalk and curb cuts at Gibbs and Sumner in Newton Centre..

Retrofitting Curb Cuts (Project CD0903E, Budget balance, \$6,000). A list of 7 locations (Homer Street, Beacon St. @ Dalton, Centre Green @ Langley, 1188 Centre Green, 82 Lincoln Street, 100 Walnut Street, 28 Commonwealth St) (19 curb cuts) have been identified by committee members and staff. Project 10% complete; although tactile surfaces have been added to these intersections most locations require additional corrective action to be ADA complaint.

Cold Spring Accessible Route (CD10-03A, Budget balance: \$36,000) Project includes accessible "L shaped" pathway from parking area to circle where the farmer's market is held. Project will be bid with other CDBG-R (stimulus) projects in March and constructed Summer 2010.

Nahanton Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Space (CDR09-03, Budget balance: \$30,000)

Project includes retrofitting park for handicap accessibility through the construction of an accessible pathway and the addition of a van accessible parking space. Project will be bid in March and constructed Summer 2010.

Newton Centre Accessible Pathway and Handicap Parking Spaces (CDR09-04, Budget balance: \$23,500) Project includes construction of an accessible pathway and the addition of two handicap accessible parking spaces. Project will be bid in March and constructed Summer 2010.

Angino Farm Accessible Route and Cedar Beds (CD10-03E, Budget balance: \$1,152.14). Project includes purchase of accessible cedar planting beds for the Farm's Learning Garden and the construction of an accessible route from the handicapped parking to the Learning Garden. Project complete; awaiting final labor bill from DPW.

--Kathleen noted that the accessible routes and paths at Cold Spring, Nahanton, and Newton Centre (above) will break ground by late spring.

OTHER BUSINESS

Some MCPD members raised concerns about the fact that during the Consolidated Planning process very little funds were allocated for Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). Members wondered why the Department of Public Works did not submit an application for funds for Accessible Pedestrian Signals. Kathleen said that although CDBG funds can be used to pay for APS equipment and installation they cannot be used for maintenance costs. DPW's budget must increase to account for the additional maintenance associated with the APS. Jini noted that the last one they installed was 2 years ago and Public Works has not installed the ones we've been asking for, for years.

Kathleen reported that the City anticipates an increase in CDBG funds, which would increase the funds available for access projects. The MCPD can then recommend to allocate these additional funds to Audible Pedestrian Signals or to other projects. There was discussion about various locations and going on a site-visit with Clint Schuckel. Some of the main concerns are Centre and Center, Beacon and Washington, and in front of Newton Wellesley Hospital.

Maryan brought up 4 issues.

1. There's been construction at Hammond St and Commonwealth Ave and there are new pedestrian lights that are not on for a long enough period for people to cross the streets. On Hammond St there's a utility pole in the middle of the sidewalk. She has spoken with officials from the city and state, but no one is willing to resolve the situation.
2. Near 12 Wachusett Street, they ended the sidewalk in front of a house. They told her the sidewalk ends if the next resident does not want sidewalk on their front yard.
3. She's been on the coalition committee for snow removal from sidewalks and curb cuts. She has a letter from the AAB that says the city is not in compliance with the snow removal laws. She's started a blog online with photos and she welcomes input.
4. She noted she intends to discuss the city's ADA Transition Plan with the Mayor, as it has not been updated for a long time.

No other business was conducted due to small attendance.

A motion passed to adjourn at 8:00 pm.

Note: The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, April 12, 2010.

Respectfully submitted, Beverly Droz